

## 12. OCCURRENCE OF FALCATED TEAL *ANAS FALCATA* GEORGI IN WEST BENGAL

While taking part in the Asian Waterfowl Census 1993, in January, K.M., B.B. and I visited a site known as Satragachi Jheel. There we observed the presence of one male falcated teal (*Anas falcata*). Due to haze we could not locate the presence of any female or other male falcated teals. The bird was easily identified due to the deep metallic green head which occasionally kept reflecting in the sunlight and the sickle shaped feathers on the back. It was a very aggressive bird. It kept pecking at any other duck which wandered within reach.

On January 18th 1993 a male falcated teal and two male baikal teals (*Anas formosa*) in breeding plumage were reported by Janajit Ray, a local bird watcher, from Shantiniketan. He had been reporting about the occurrence of falcated teals for last 4-5 years, but it was not confirmed. This year B.B. and A.B. visited the site to confirm his report.

I visited Daburchar, a mud flat on Matla River in January 1992. There I sighted 14 Common Shelducks (*Tadorna tadorna*) which I photographed. One of the

photographs showed the Common Shelducks in flight accompanied by two Wigeons (*Anas penelope*), a common pochard (*Aythya ferina*) and an unidentified duck. I made a slide copy of the photograph and projected it on a big screen. The unidentified duck turned out to be a falcated teal.

Though considered a rare winter visitor to India, I suppose the presence of falcated teal is regular in West Bengal. A correct report was not made earlier or the bird may have been overlooked amongst the crowd of other common migratory ducks.

Thanks to IWRB for their systematic recording of migratory birds in S.E. Asia which actually revealed the occurrence of this duck in West Bengal.

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SUJAN CHATTERJEE  
KUSHAL MOOKERJEE  
BASAV BHATTACHARYA  
ANANDA BANERJEE

DB-75, Salt Lake City, Calcutta-700 064.

## 13. DIET OF INDIAN PEAFOWL *PAVO CRISTATUS* LINN. IN GIR FOREST, GUJARAT

(With a text-figure)

Indian peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*), is a widely distributed and at places locally abundant bird in the Indian subcontinent. Though, it was hunted once and is a serious pest to the crops in many parts of its range, the information on its diet is largely qualitative and incomplete. Ali and Ripley (1987) and Johnsingh and Murali (1980) provided preliminary information on the diet of peafowl.

The information presented here was obtained during a study on habitat selection by Indian peafowl from December 1992 to April 1993 in Gir N.P. and Sanctuary (Trivedi 1993). Gir N.P. and Sanctuary covering an area of 1412 sq. Km, is situated in the Saurashtra peninsula of Gujarat. Tropical dry deciduous forest, thorn forest and riverine forests clothe the area. It is the last stronghold of the Asiatic lion (*Panthera leo persica*) and apart from the lion has a diverse vertebrate faunal assemblage.

Four hundred and twenty eight droppings of peafowl were examined for food remains by breaking open fresh dry droppings. Remains were noted in the form of frequency of occurrence.

Results (Fig. 1) show that during winter, i.e. December and January, the diet was dominated by fruits of *Zizyphus*

*mauritiana* and *Z. oenoplia*. In February, there was a sharp decline in the consumption of *Z. mauritiana* whereas *Z. oenoplia* was still being consumed heavily. This was due to the fact that the peak fruiting season of *Z. mauritiana*

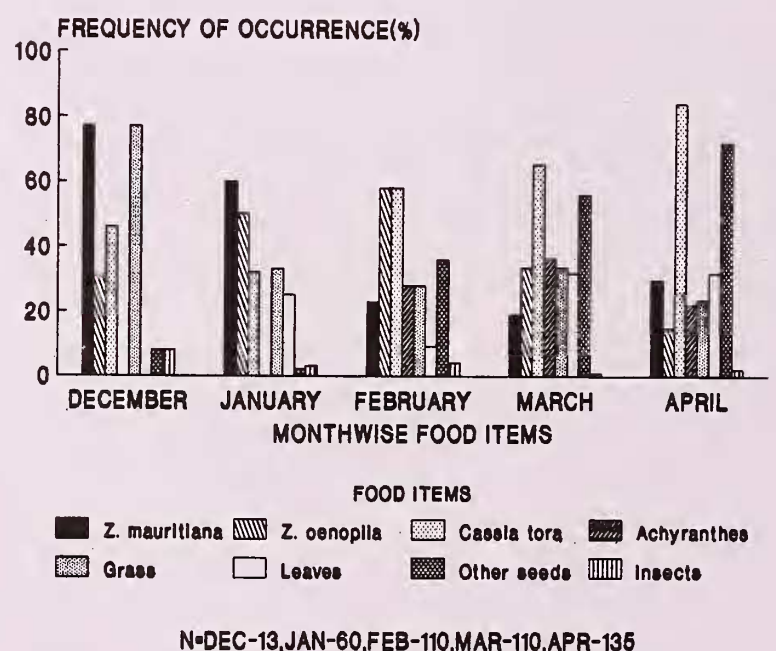


Fig. 1. Diet of peafowl based on dropping examination.